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Letter dated 17 July 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the report on the implementation of the G-8 action programme on forests (see annex), which was adopted by the G-8 Foreign Ministers at their meeting held at Miyazaki, Japan, on 12 and 13 July 2000.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, under item 97 of the provisional agenda, and of the substantive session of 2000 of the Economic and Social Council, under item 13 of the agenda.

(*Signed*) Yukio **Satoh**
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Annex to the letter dated 17 July 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE G8 ACTION PROGRAMME ON FORESTS

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I. Executive Summary

At the G8 Birmingham Summit in 1998, Heads of State or Government of eight major industrialized democracies and the President of the European Commission announced that in the year 2000 they would assess progress on implementation of the newly launched *G8 Action Programme on Forests*, which focuses on five areas of particular importance: (1) monitoring and assessment; (2) national forest programmes; (3) protected areas; (4) private sector; and (5) illegal logging. The Action Programme reflects a political commitment and aims to complement the extensive range of actions currently being taken by the international community and various regional and international processes.

This report, which will be considered at the Kyushu Okinawa Summit in July 2000, provides information on efforts made to date by G8 members domestically, internationally and collaboratively towards sustainable forest management. G8 activities since 1998 are diverse, reflecting the variety of their forest ecosystems, land ownership arrangements, administrative and governance structures, and international cooperation programmes, as well as G8 members' individual and collective leadership and endeavours with respect to forests. They also illustrate where the G8 members have capitalised on their strengths and worked cooperatively on a number of issues as opportunities arose, including in support of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF). This report highlights some significant activities, while a more detailed overview is provided in the individual progress reports attached as Annex A.

In the area of **monitoring and assessment**, the G8 members took a wide range of actions from launching a new national forest inventory system to establishing a public-private stakeholder process on implementation of criteria and indicators, adopting national guidelines to assess forest resources, developing a national climate change strategy that includes forest sector issues, as well as improving the comparability of national inventories in Europe. The G8 members hosted international meetings on criteria and indicators under the Montreal and Pan-European processes and established new cooperative forest fire management programmes with partner countries in Southeast Asia, the Amazon, the Mediterranean basin and Central America. The G8 members are also in the early stages of initiating a collaborative effort to assess the enhanced use of remote sensing as a tool to inventory, assess, monitor and manage forests.

With regard to **national forest programmes,** G8 members' actions taken include adopting strategic documents on forest conservation and use, establishing a new national forest programme, enacting new legislation either nationally or to reduce debt in return for tropical forest conservation, and producing major policy documents on promoting sustainable forest management. Bilateral and international cooperation were strengthened to support national forest programmes in Africa, Asia, Central and Latin America and the Near East. The G8 members also sponsored international initiatives and experts meetings related to national forest programmes to support the work of the IFF.

With respect to **protected areas**, the G8 members took actions such as designating a new national protected forest system to preserve wildlife and other values, announcing plans to close extensive areas of national forests to harvesting and road building, expanding in a significant fashion protected areas, and establishing a border park to protect significant boreal forests and a European network of protected areas. Cooperative work on forest protection in

the Near East was expanded, and an international experts meeting on protected forest areas was co-sponsored to support the work of the IFF.

A number of G8 members' actions involved the **private sector.** These range from forming a national government-NGO coalition on new technology for forest industries to launching a public-private pilot project on sustainable forest management in Central Africa, creating a joint venture to restore Central American forests devastated by Hurricane Mitch, and announcing plans for a new fund to support private sector activities in East Asia. Further development was also seen domestically in voluntary certification schemes by the private sector, including NGOs, in voluntary codes of conduct by industry, in some cases with support from governments, through grants, studies and projects, as well as in assistance in aboriginal business development and local decision making.

In the area of **illegal logging**, the G8 members highlight a major review of the nature and extent of illegally harvested timber, new funding commitments to tackle this problem in partner countries particularly in Southeast Asia, as well as plans to host a regional conference on illegal logging and cross border trade. Funds were also provided through international organisations to improve statistics and economic information systems in tropical timber producing countries and increase market transparency.

The Action Programme on Forests launched two years ago represents the first consolidated experience for the G8 members in working together on the world's forests. It builds on individual G8 member's experiences and complements the extensive range of actions currently being taken by the international community in various regional and international processes. While the actions taken to date are important contributions towards sustainable forest management and in turn sustainable development, the G8 members recognise that further efforts are needed by all members to meet these ends.

II. Introduction

Heads of State or Government of eight major industrialised democracies (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States of America) and the President of the European Commission meet annually to discuss issues affecting people in their own and other countries. Recognising the continuing pressure on the world's forests and the positive contribution that sustainable forest management can make to sustainable development, the G8 Leaders at their summit in Denver 1997 reiterated their commitment to implement the proposals for action contained in the report of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development's Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF, 1997) and agreed to support a practical Action Programme focused on five priority areas:

- **Monitoring and Assessment**
- **National Forest Programmes**
- **Protected Areas**
- **Private Sector**
- **Illegal Logging**

In May 1998, the **"G8 Action Programme on Forests"** was launched by G8 Foreign Ministers. G8 Leaders agreed at the Birmingham Summit to assess progress on implementation of the Action Programme in the year 2000.

The G8 Action Programme on Forests reflects political commitment and aims to complement the extensive range of actions currently being undertaken by the international community and various regional and international processes and to strengthen some activities G8 members have identified as issues of particular importance. The G8 Action Programme focuses on domestic actions by the G8 members and on areas where they can make unique contributions through their bilateral assistance programmes and through their support for intergovernmental processes.

This report provides information on efforts made to date. In Chapter **III. Implementation Highlights**, illustrative activities carried out in this context are highlighted by the five priority areas. Further information on current activities is provided in the individual reports of G8 members contained in **Annex A**. This report will be considered at the Kyushu Okinawa Summit in July 2000.

III. Implementation Highlights

This section contains highlights provided by individual G8 members on their efforts to advance particular aspects of the G8 Action Programme on Forests. Collectively these highlights illustrate the range of activities being undertaken cooperatively, internationally and domestically which support the Action Programme. Details on the work of each G8 member can be found in the individual reports included at Annex A.

Together, the G8 members account for nearly 40% of the world's forests[†] and the vast majority of bilateral assistance to forests. However, it is important to recognise that G8 countries are highly diverse regarding the extent and nature of their forest ecosystems, land ownership patterns, governance and regulatory systems, and terms of aid and international co-operation. The European Commission, as the executive body of the European Union (EU), is increasingly involved in major forest policy processes within and outside Europe.

The activities highlighted below reflect this variety within the G8.

A. Monitoring and Assessment

The G8 members have been making substantial efforts to develop better information on the state of forests and monitor and assess their condition, domestically and in many regions of the world. Canada, Japan, Russia and the USA are members of the 12-country Montreal Process on criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management, while France, Germany, Italy, Russia, the UK and the European Commission actively participate in the Pan-European Process on criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management.

In 1998 and 1999, Russia and the USA respectively hosted the 10th and 11th Meetings of the Montreal Process Working Group on Criteria and Indicators for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Temperate and Boreal Forests. The meetings, held in Moscow and Charleston, South Carolina, brought together representatives of governments, international and non-governmental organisations, other criteria and indicators processes and academics, as well as a variety of domestic stakeholders, to advance implementation efforts. In 1998 countries reported their progress on institutionalising criteria and indicators, while at the 1999 meeting, among other things, they called on FAO to cosponsor with interested governments an international meeting to explore ways to improve comparability among the several existing criteria and indicator initiatives. Also in 1999, Canada, which serves as the Liaison Office for the Montreal Process, hosted a meeting with its Pan-European counterpart to share experiences and discuss further development of criteria and indicators, data collection and reporting and other issues of mutual interest.

The Third Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, held in Lisbon in 1998, reached an important milestone when it adopted general criteria and indicators for monitoring and assessing sustainability of European forests, as well as *Pan-European Guidelines for Sustainable Forest Management at the Operational Level*. In October 1999 the Pan-European Process agreed a detailed programme of work which includes a review of the regional criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management and their refinement for use in national forest inventories and management plans within Europe. Further, the European Commission is in the process of improving comparability of national inventories and establishing a database for community forest measures and programmes.

[†] *State of the World's Forests 1999*, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), Table 2.

In a related area, the G8 has begun work on a collaborative initiative to consider the enhanced use of remote sensing as a tool to inventory, assess, monitor and manage forests and detect and respond to forest related threats and disasters such as fire. Work is underway to make an inventory of existing G8 remote sensing initiatives, both domestic and in partnership with countries and international organisations.

Recognising the disastrous effects on forests of the catastrophic fires of 1998, as well as their threat to the global environment and regional stability, G8 members have strengthened and expanded co-operative activities with partner countries in Southeast Asia and Central and Latin America. For example in December 1998, Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA), the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), and the Indonesian government co-organised the *International Cross-Sectoral Forum on Forest Fire Management in Southeast Asia*, attended by over 200 experts from 17 countries and 8 international organisations, in order to share information, review existing forest fire management activities, and contribute to the effective implementation of future measures to combat forest fires. In addition, Canada worked closely with Mexico in early 1999 to develop and implement a new Forest Fire Information System for Mexico. It accesses weather data through the World Meteorological Organization and processes them through the Canadian Forest Fire Danger Rating System to produce daily fire weather and fire danger maps.

Individual G8 members have undertaken considerable efforts to better monitor and assess the state of forests domestically. In 1999 Japan launched a new nationwide Continuous Forest Inventory (CFI) to monitor and assess forest resources and their dynamics using nationally unified methodologies. The CFI is considering the compatibility with the Montreal Process criteria and indicators and so reflects the multifaceted components of sustainable forest management such as biodiversity, productivity, ecosystem health, conservation of water resources and global carbon cycles.

The Federal Forest Service of Russia adopted new Guidelines for the State Forest Account, which introduce uniform procedures consistent with the Forest Code and provide a basis for timely adjustment of national forest policies at federal and regional levels. In 1998 the Forest Account was conducted through a multi-factorial assessment of forest resources. A comparison of data between the periods 1993-98 and 1988-93 reveals a general improvement in basic characteristics of Russia's forests (e.g., increased area of forest lands, greater share of conifers in the "young stands" age group, and significantly shorter periods after which forest plantations are considered forested lands), while also identifying serious challenges facing regional forest management.

Germany is also carrying out a broad survey of its forests and various forest functions. Following up on the first Federal Forest Inventory in 1987, which supplied baseline information on forest area, shares of tree species, growing stock, forest structures, forest opening, etc., this second Federal Forest Inventory, scheduled for 2002, will provide additional, topical information on growth, removals and ecological parameters, taking into account the Pan-European criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management.

In 1998 the UK published the *Forestry Standard*, setting out how the principles of sustainability will be delivered, and the criteria and indicators by which sustainability can be assessed at national and forest management unit levels. The UK Government will monitor performance against these criteria, which will influence development and refinement of the *Standard* as well as related policy, regulations, incentives and guidance.

Also in 1998, in a major step to improve US forest monitoring and assessment nationwide, the Chief of the Forest Service launched the "Roundtable on Sustainable Forests," a unique public-private initiative bringing together representatives of federal, state and local government, NGOs, academia, industry and forest owners to facilitate implementation of the Montreal Process criteria and indicators for the 300 million ha of US forests, including 180 million ha owned by 10 million private owners. The Roundtable will hold a number of workshops in 2000 to address data collection issues for each of the seven criteria and their associated indicators.

B. National Forest Programmes

National forest programmes as defined in 1997 by the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) encompass a wide range of approaches to achieve sustainable forest management reflecting national circumstances. In order to promote implementation of the many IPF proposals for action directed to countries, as well as to gain experience with national forest programmes, Germany and the UK together with several other developed and developing countries sponsored in 1998 the *Six-Country-Initiative* for putting the IPF proposals for action into practice at the national level. The initiative involved a series of case studies to assess the IPF Proposals for Action against national settings.

Several G8 members continue to be actively involved in supporting the Pilot Program to Conserve the Brazilian Rain Forest (PP-G7), which was initiated by the G7 at the Houston Economic Summit in 1990. Germany and the EU continue to be the major donors; other contributors include France, Japan, the UK and the USA.

France, Germany and the UK are also co-operating through UNDP's Programme on Forests (PROFOR) to promote sustainable forest management in a variety of partner countries, while Italy and Japan are actively working with FAO to the same end. The FAO-Italy Co-operative Programme includes numerous projects in the Mediterranean, Northern Africa and the Near East aimed at promoting and demonstrating complementarity among natural resource management activities, including forests, as well as economic efficiency and participatory and integrated approaches. Japan is working with FAO and the International Model Forest Network Secretariat to host a series of international workshops through 2000 on the promotion of model forests as a field-level application of sustainable forest management, particularly focusing on the Asian region.

G8 members strengthened or initiated bilateral activities with partner countries to support national forest programmes. For example, Germany has identified such programmes as a basic standard for its decisions regarding development co-operation with partner countries in the field of forests. In this context a German technical co-operation strategy is being elaborated to assist development co-operation agencies and their partners to implement the IPF proposals for action and develop national forest programmes.

Canadian development assistance continues in Asia, Africa and the Americas, with a focus on national forest programs and community forestry. Such assistance is administered through the Canadian International Development Agency and the International Development Research Centre, in partnership with Canadian groups and organizations in the private and public sector in recipient countries.

During the 1990s, France enhanced its support in several Mediterranean and African partner countries for environment and sustainable development co-operation projects focused on improving the management of natural resources, including forests and rangelands.

In 1998 US President Clinton launched a major new initiative to assist partner countries by signing the Tropical Forest Conservation Act (TFCA), authorising the reduction of official debt owed the US by tropical countries in exchange for forest conservation measures. The law expands the innovative 1992 Enterprise for the Americas Initiative, which has cancelled nearly $1 billion in official debt while generating substantial local currency for child survival and environmental projects.

The European Commission, recognising the growing importance of forests within and outside Europe, recently released several fundamental policy documents relevant to forest management, conservation and national forest programmes, including the *Forest Strategy for the European Union*. Moreover, a Council Regulation on support for rural development regulates financial support for forestry measures and links it to existence of and provisions in national or sub-national forest programmes. The EC supports numerous development co-operation projects with the objective of building capacity for national forest programmes in partner countries.

On the domestic front, G8 members have taken various steps to improve national forest programmes. In the context of *Comite 21*, France committed at the highest level to promote sustainable forest management by enacting a new forestry law entitled *Orientation and Modernisation Forestry Law* (*loi de modernisation et d'orientation forestière*).

Canada renewed its commitment to sustainable forest management by adopting a new five-year strategy to bring together the ecological, economic, social and cultural aspects of forest conservation and use. The National Forest Strategy (1998-2003), titled *Sustainable Forests: A Canadian Commitment*, is a collective attempt to reconcile the range of expectations placed on the forest and forest managers.

In October 1998, following a review of relevant national forest laws, Japan introduced a system to make available for public comment draft forest management plans at the local government level, and substantially expanded the roles of municipalities in its forest management planning system.

To preserve and improve long term functioning of its forests, Germany initiated a process of creating its own National Forest Programme based on experiences gained through the Six-Country Initiative and in close co-operation with States, NGOs and other relevant partners. Results are expected in late 2000.

In Russia, where forest fires are an acute problem causing significant economic and environmental losses, the Federal government has begun addressing fire through its national forest programme and in January 1999 approved the *Federal Target Programme: Forest Fire Management for 1999-2005*, which outlines urgent actions and targets to deal with forest fires. Programme implementation and timely investment in fire management are expected to reduce the number and area of anthropogenic forest fires and related economic losses, as well as conserve forest biodiversity, enhance ecological and resource potential of forest ecosystems, improve maintenance of carbon balance, and eventually meet the goals of the Russian Federation's Concept of Sustainable Development.

C. Protected Areas

The G8 members consider forest protection to be an important part of sustainable forest management and are involved in international and domestic efforts to enhance forest protection. For example, recognising the need to build consensus on forest protection and how to achieve it, the USA and Brazil co-sponsored the *International Experts Meeting on Protected Forest Areas* in March 1999 in San Juan, Puerto Rico as a contribution to the work of the IFF. France and the UK, as well as other countries and international organisations, collaborated as members of the organising committee for this meeting, which drew 130 experts from 70 countries, organisations, environmental and indigenous groups, research institutions and universities.

France, Germany, Italy, the UK and the European Community are co-operating under the *Pan-European Work Programme on the Conservation and Enhancement of Biological and Landscape Diversity in Forest Ecosystems,* which aims to conserve all types of forests in Europe and is complemented by EC research programmes on indicators for forest biodiversity, as well as programmes on natural forests and forest reserves. The European Community has also created *Natura 2000* to develop a cohesive European network of representative protected sites, including many forest sites, by 2004.

Complementing these efforts, Development Cooperation of Italy is actively involved in supporting a process of transboundary collaboration toward the sustainable management of protected ecosystems shared across international boundaries in the Peruvian and Bolivian Amazon, and in the contiguous National Parks in the South African region, by opening biological and economic corridors, harmonising respective standards, relevant legislation and management procedures, and by fostering collaboration across the borders by various abutting countries.

In 1999 Russia and Lithuania submitted a request to UNESCO, now under consideration, to include the Curonian Spit National Park in Russia and the Kurshu Nerija National Park in Lithuania on the list of World Cultural and Natural Heritage Sites. Russia is also working with Finland on plans to co-develop a border park in the frontier zone involving the Paanayarvi (Russia) and Oulanka (Finland) National Parks.

In Germany, 65% of its forests are under some sort of special protection, including 83,000 ha excluded completely from commercial uses. In the UK, the Government has initiated a review of its mechanisms for establishing and managing its protected areas.

To ensure the public benefit of forests, in December 1998 Japan formulated the *Basic Plan for Administration and Management of National Forests,* which introduced three new types of National Forest classification by the purpose of management: Forest for Water and Land Conservation, Forest for Humans and Nature, and Forests for Recycling Use of Resources. Japan has since expanded the first two categories, which are for public benefit, to include 80% of national forests, and has been also implementing a Protected Forest System to protect essential natural forests and precious wildlife habitats, which as of April 1999 encompassed about 514,000 ha in 812 locations within the country.

In October 1999, US President Clinton announced plans to protect an additional 18 million ha of national forests from commercial use in order to provide research sites, protect vital fish and wildlife habitats and guard against invasive species. A year-long review process will

solicit public comments and produce an environmental impact statement to determine the specific forests to be protected.

D. Private Sector

Individual G8 members have expanded their activities with non-government interests in order to promote sustainable forest management. For example, France has launched a pilot project on integrated sustainable management of tropical rain forests, which brings together local private and public stakeholders in the Dimako region of Cameroon to demonstrate in concrete terms how a tropical rain forest can be sustainably managed.

During his July 1999 visit to China, Japan's Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi announced the establishment of a fund (*"Obuchi Fund"*) to support Japan's private sector groups' activities with Chinese counterparts to promote afforestation in China.

The Italian Development Cooperation's project on the agroforestry systems in the Amazonia Region, in the Brazilian states of Rondonia and Acre, aims to help associations of small producers (principally *colonos* and *seringueiros*) in these two States, in finding new economic earning alternatives, that correct the tendency of predatory and indiscriminate exploitation of the natural resources, irreplaceable for the biosphere and for climatic balances, that cause massive deforestation of extensive areas in favour of wild grazing and/or mining.

The US Agency for International Development and the US Department of Commerce joined ranks with the American Forest and Paper Association under its *Sustainable Forestry Initiative* to restore areas of Central America devastated by Hurricane Mitch in 1999, including a pilot programme on the Honduran Island of Guanaja designed to establish the infrastructure needed for long-term sustainable forest management.

The European Community contributes financial support for forest management and conservation complementing the Member State's financial aid systems. EC contributions cover activities such as afforestation, improvement of established forests, reforestation after calamities, forest roads, marketing and processing of forest products, and facilitation of small owner co-operatives. The EC has supported forest certification as an evolving, voluntary, market driven instrument and as a potential, versatile forest policy tool through grants, by hosting conferences and by commissioning publications, as well as by supporting projects regarding certification in tropical partner countries.

In June 1999, the UK Woodland Assurance Scheme (UKWAS) was launched as a voluntary scheme for the independent certification of forest management in the UK. The scheme was developed by a broad partnership of forestry, environmental and social organisations in response to increasing demand for timber products from sustainably managed forests. UKWAS represents the first ever consensus on a forestry performance standard at a national level. UKWAS is managed by a Steering Group made up of representatives of all sectors and interested parties. In the UK, nearly 1 million hectares of forests and woodland, out of a total of 2.5 million, have already been certified against the UKWAS Standard.

The US considers public-private partnerships a powerful tool for sustainable forest management at home and abroad. For example, the US Government joined the Ford Motor Company and a consortium of environmental groups led by the World Wildlife Fund-US to prepare a comprehensive *Conservation Assessment of the Terrestrial Ecoregions of North America*, including forests, which was published in May 1999. In 1998 the US Department of

Energy and the American Forest and Paper Association expanded their co-operative *Technology Vision and Research Agenda 2020*, which promotes sustainable forestry practices across the US.

E. Illegal Logging

G8 members have strengthened their efforts to work with partners to assess the scope of illegally harvested timber, which robs governments and other forest owners of significant revenues and acts as disincentive to sustainable forest management. For example, in 1999 the UK completed a major review of this subject in Indonesia, *Addicted to Rent: Corporate and Spatial Distribution of Forest Resources in Indonesia; Implications for Forest Sustainability and Government Policy* and is following up on counter measures with the government and civil society organisations. In the same year, the UK provided funds to other partner countries to tackle illegal logging, and over a three-year period will support the *Forestry Crime and Reporting Project* in Cambodia and the core activities of *Global Forest Watch*.

The US has committed to hosting an regional conference in Southeast Asia, drawing on the results of the "Forest Law Enforcement" symposium sponsored by the World Bank in Phnom Penh, Cambodia in June 1999, as well as other work underway by governments and NGOs. The US is in the process of consulting with governments and international and non-governmental organisations on potential dates, venue and programme.

Japan has made financial contributions to the activities that aim to improve economic information and market transparency on timber trade. For instance, Japan has contributed funds through ITTO to the producer member countries' projects to develop their human resources and institutions, with a view to developing the statistics and information systems relating to the production and trade of forest products, and to enhancing their statistical processing ability. Furthermore, Japan has also contributed funds to ITTO for its co-operative activities with relevant international organizations to enhance the statistical functions and network internationally.

As documented in its development policy on forests, the EC supports rules that apply world-wide, in order to tackle the problem of trans-national logging companies operating in unregulated frameworks. The EC finances projects which deal with this vexing, persistent problem of illegal logging, and, in specific cases brought to its attention, has approached partner state governments.

The Italian Development Cooperation is actively involved in integrated programmes for the systemic management of forest resources and protected areas, all of which include initiatives to fight illegal hunting and logging, both directly by strengthening forest inspection and control services and the participation of local communities, and by providing economic and administrative incentives towards the establishment of forms of legal use of forest resources. Particular enphasis is given to the development of environmentally compatible forms of their utilization, e.g. ecological and cultural tourism, etc.

Domestically in the UK, tree felling is regulated through licences, management plans, tree preservation orders and statutory development control. All applications for felling licences are placed on a public register before approval is granted, to help the public identify and report unauthorised felling.

IV. Conclusion

The Action Programme on Forests launched two years ago represents the first consolidated experience for the G8 members in working together on the world's forests. It builds on individual G8 member's experiences and complements the extensive range of actions currently being taken by the international community in various regional and international processes.

This report demonstrates that G8 activities since 1998 are diverse, reflecting the variety of their forest ecosystems, land ownership arrangements, administrative and governance structures, and international cooperation programmes, as well as G8 members' individual and collective leadership and endeavours with respect to forests. The report also illustrates where the G8 members have capitalised on their strengths and worked cooperatively on a number of issues as opportunities arose, including in support of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF).

While the actions taken to date are important contributions towards sustainable forest management and in turn sustainable development, the G8 members recognise that further efforts are needed by all members to meet these ends.